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—As described, the display elements 3415, 3413, and 3411 described above present information from or about a competitor to the subject of the information or content that is otherwise being presented to the user. The display element 3415 represents competing service providers, and may be useful at least when the user is viewing or is being presented with content relating to a particular service provider. The display element 3413 represents competing product information, and may be useful at least when the user is viewing or is being presented with a page describing a particular product. And the display element 3411 represents competing information, and is useful at least when the user is being presented with content or information of a particular type (e.g., news or business information).—

Claims

Please add the following new claim 6, and then cancel claims 1-5. After these amendments, only claim 6 is pending.

1-5. (Cancel)

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6. (New) A method of displaying information for a user that is operating a client computer, the method comprising the acts of:

(a) displaying a first document in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the client computer, wherein the first document has a resource identifier associated with it and is retrieved over a network from a first web server using HTTP protocol, wherein the first document is a hypertext document that includes graphical display elements and also includes links to linked documents, and wherein the first document is published by a first online merchant and provides information about a first item that is available for purchase from the first online merchant;

(b) detecting that a document published by the first online merchant is being displayed on the display screen associated with the client computer;

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(c) upon detecting that a document published by the first online merchant is being displayed on the display screen associated with the client computer, automatically activating a competitive information display element on the display screen associated with the client computer, wherein the competitive information display element is not part of or embedded into the first document that is displayed in the web browser window, wherein the activation of the competitive information display element signifies that competitive information relating to the first online merchant is likely available, and wherein the competitive information display element is activated in response to detecting that a document published by the first online merchant is being displayed on the display screen;

(d) monitoring the user's selection of the activated competitive information display element;

(e) detecting that the user wishes to display a document from a second online merchant;

(f) displaying a second document in a web browser window on the display screen associated with the client computer, wherein the second document has a resource identifier associated with it and is retrieved over a network from a second web server using HTTP protocol, wherein the second document is a hypertext document that includes graphical display elements and also includes links to linked documents, and wherein the second document is published by the second online merchant and provides information about a second item that is available for purchase from the second online merchant;

(g) detecting that a document published by the second online merchant is being displayed on the display screen associated with the client computer;

(h) upon detecting that a document published by the second online merchant is being displayed on the display screen associated with the client computer, automatically activating the competitive information display element on the display screen associated with the client computer, wherein the competitive information display element is not part of or embedded into the second document that is displayed in the web browser window, wherein the activation of the competitive information display element signifies that competitive information relating to the second online merchant is likely available, and wherein the competitive information display element is activated in response to detecting that a document published by the second online merchant is being displayed on the display screen;